



The Talon

Gripping News



Volume VI

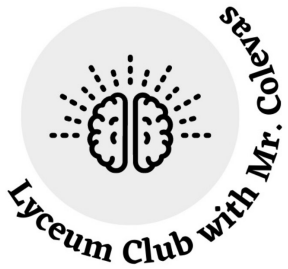
Issue IV

Onteora High School

Boiceville, NY 12412

June 2024

What's Inside?



Hear a Debate From
the Philosophy Club

Page 5



Where is the Class of
2024 going?

Pages 8–9



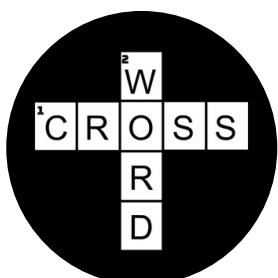
Hear Memories
From Former
Phoenicia Students!

Page 13



Read Your
Horoscope!

Page 14



Puzzles!

Page 15

Illustrations courtesy of Lily Stoudt

Farewell Phoenicia

By Virginia Potter, Senior, Phoenicia Class of 2015



Phoenicia retirees, courtesy of Cynthia Bracken

for personal photos. I found my yearbook from the year I graduated. When asked what I would miss about Phoenicia, my third-grade self had responded, “I am going to miss all of the teachers and staff. And no homework during Spirit Week!” I can definitely attest that my predictions were correct. My sister, Phoenicia Class of 2013, answered for her third-grade yearbook, “I like that the school is in the country, not the city. I like that we have four seasons instead of just one.” This made me laugh, not only because, at age 8, she had lived in Phoenicia her whole life and nothing to compare it to, but also because now, at age 19, she wants to live in a city.



Courtesy of Cynthia Bracken

I had a chance to speak to Christina Signore, the president of the PTA who chaired the event committee. She expressed appreciation to the teachers, community members, donors, building and grounds staff, and the district for their support with the event, saying that all those who worked on the celebration channeled the energy from their sadness into giving a proper farewell to the school they cared so much about.

To answer the question that many of my fellow Phoenicia alumni may be wondering about, I did ask about the time capsule. Context those who did not attend Phoenicia in 2014: for the 50th anniversary of Phoenicia Elementary, the whole school got

together to bury a time capsule in the playground. It was supposed to be opened at the 100th anniversary, which would have been in 2064. With the closure of the school, many of us wondered what would happen to it. I asked around at the Farewell and found that I was not the first to ask by far. Christina told me that they had wanted to open the capsule at the event, but the map leading to its location had been lost to time. I was happy to inform her that I knew exactly where the time capsule was. In fact, it was right beneath the celebration, a few feet to the left of a path leading to the playground. Perhaps some day soon we will get to dig it up and see what we buried inside.

The closure of Phoenicia is not the only change that makes this year feels like the end of an era for the Onteora District. In the high school alone we have eight people retiring (see page 3 for their reflections). Next year will be a new beginning for so many. Teachers and students from Phoenicia will find themselves at Bennett or Woodstock, and the current fifth graders from Bennett will join the Middle/High School. It is easy to look back and see what we are losing, but I hope we can also see the potential for new community bonds and remember that, as the Phoenicia Farewell has shown, the school will be remembered fondly by all who walked through its halls.



Courtesy of www.phoeniciaschoolspiritswag.com

With the final day of school for Phoenicia fast approaching, the Phoenicia PTA hosted a wonderful celebration of the school's 60 years of history. I have been given the challenging task of capturing the feelings of the day. The weather seemed to mirror the emotions of those in attendance. We expected rain and grief, but instead were greeted with a lovely and temperate afternoon filled with joy and bittersweet remembrances. As PTA Vice President Janice Tieri said in her opening speech, “We can acknowledge the loss we feel while also being grateful for memories we share and those we will make anew.”

Attendees were given name tags upon which they could check their affiliation with the school. I myself checked the box labeled “student/alumni,” having graduated from Phoenicia Elementary in 2015. I saw many of my former teachers with name tags that denoted “teacher/staff” or “retiree” and numerous people who checked “community member.”

Ms. LaMonda, who has taught so many of us Phoenicia grads, checked all four. She graduated from the sixth grade at Phoenicia in 1980 and returned to teach in the same kindergarten that she and her siblings all attended. Ms. LaMonda is retiring this June, marking 32 years that she has taught at the school. For her, and the rest of the attendees, the school holds many precious memories. Though it has not been decided what the building will be used for, she told me, “I hope somebody loves it.”



Heidi LaMonda, courtesy of The Talon Staff

This spirit of nostalgia was one shared by all who attended the event. So many people there were returning for the first time in years. In the cafetorium, the PTA had set up stations for every decade that the school had been open, and alumni crowded around searching

Letter From the Editor

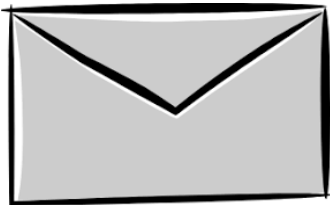
Dear Dedicated Readers,

Alas, my time as Editor-in-Chief is coming to a close. I would like to start by thanking the brilliant writers, artists, and editors that I have had the pleasure of working with during my time at The Talon. They are what give our paper and our community its life, and of course, none of it could have been done without them. I know I will greatly miss every part of the process, from the brainstorm meetings to layout crunch time, but more than that I really am so excited to see what my successors accomplish.

Next, I would like to thank Ms. Conroy, our diligent and considerate Faculty Advisor. Without her, I would not be writing to you now. She asked me to edit for the paper at the end of my sophomore year after overhearing me debate the fine points of some grammar convention. I originally said no, but I warmed up to the idea after a few more requests and started as the Copy Editor as a junior. It is safe to say: I sure am glad I did!

And lastly, I would like to thank you, readers from within the school and the Onteora community, for making it all possible. It has meant so much to me to see you excited to check your horoscopes or invested in solving the crossword. I look forward to joining you in eagerly awaiting the next issue.

One last time as your Editor-in-Chief,
Virginia Potter



The Talon Staff



Editor-in-Chief:
Virginia Potter

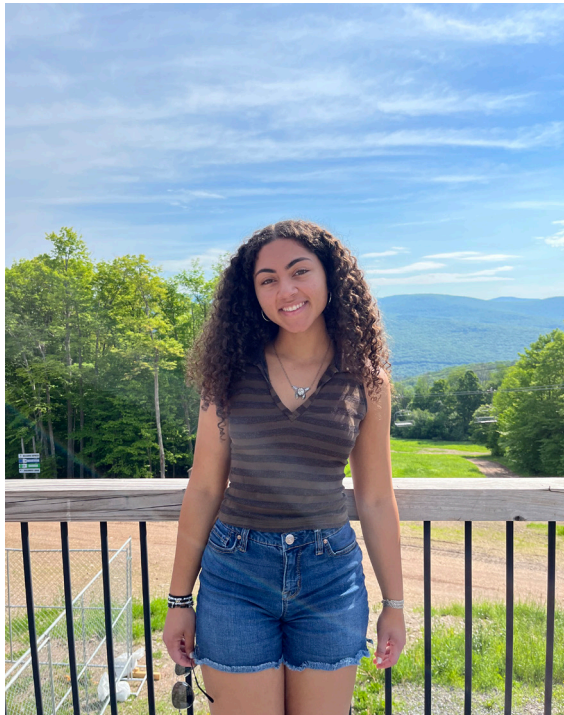
Managing Editors:
Nico Stackpole
Shelby Buryk
Talula Kirschner

Graphics Editor:
Lily Stoudt

Student Journalists
Val Albright
Aoife Bronston
Shelby Buryk
Abigail Elliott
Ada Helm
Adam Jordaan-Grady
Harsimran Kaur
Talula Kirschner
Foster Knoche
Delilah Lieberman
Lucia McDonagh
Lily McNamara
Samantha Navarro
Virginia Potter
David Troeger

Faculty Advisor:
Elaine Conroy

Letter From the President



Courtesy of The Talon staff

Dear Constituents,

The outdoor classroom is finally up and running! It has been very rewarding to see teachers and students using the space, and the Student Government will continue to work on the project into next year. Additionally, preparations are underway for the next round of student government elections. Underclassmen, start thinking about who you want to vote for!

I hope you have had a nice year! It has been a honor to serve as your president. I am confident that Coco Asada and the rest of the Student Government will serve you well.

And thank you Mr. Connolly for all your hard work and patience. Have a wonderful summer!

Your President,
Sophia Odato



More Photos From the Phoenicia Farewell



Courtesy of Cynthia Bracken



Courtesy of Cynthia Bracken



Phoenicia graduates, courtesy of Cynthia Bracken



Retiree Reflections

Compiled by Shelby Buryk, Sophomore

As we conclude the 2023–2024 school year at Onteora, it is important that we appreciate those who will not be in the building next year. Remarkably, there are a total of eight retirees, all of whom *The Talon* Staff wanted to recognise and expand upon in a designated article. I asked each retiree about the length of their time at Onteora, their most memorable moments, and their future after this change. Here are their responses:

Questions:

- 1. What Year did you start teaching at Onteora?
- 2. What memories from Onteora will you cherish the most?
- 3. What are you looking forward to in retirement?

Roseann Horan,
Speech-language
Pathologist



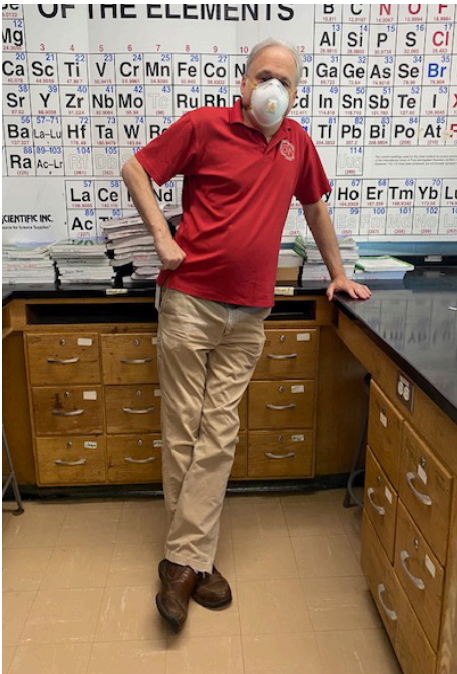
- 1. I began working at Onteora in 2012.
- 2. Special memory: Seeing lots of happy faces while students were having fun on the 8th grade trips to Six Flags that I was able to chaperone.
- 3. In retirement I am looking forward to sleeping past 5:00 a.m., spending time with family and friends, and traveling with my husband.

Cathy Merritt, English
Special Education Teacher



- 1. I have been teaching at Onteora for 33 years. I started in elementary school and came to the high school 18 years ago. I have taught every grade from pre-K to twelfth, except sixth and seventh!
- 2. I have gotten to know many great students and colleagues over the years. They have taught me so much, and I will always remember them.
- 3. What am I looking forward to in retirement? Traveling. I want to hike in the National Parks and see more of the world. And sleeping!

Don Bucher, Science
Teacher



- 1. I started at Onteora a month after my daughter Gingy was born, in 2006. I worked at New Paltz High School and two city schools before that. After six years, I returned to NPHS for four years because of declining enrollment as described in the most recent *Talon's* front-page article. I came back in time to see my daughters Lulu and Gingy finish school here, which has been really satisfying.
- 2. I have come to really appreciate the opportunity to teach so many different classes at Onteora—three regents and three AP science classes. I've loved being able to learn so much on the job and to share what I've learned with students.
- 2. I've had some health issues this year, which is why I have not been a full time presence in school. First things first, I look forward to recovering my health so that I can see what the possibilities are for retirement. As I have been mostly

an Earth Science teacher in recent years, I would like to explore the spectacular geology of the National Parks, which I reference at times in class but have not visited. If I'm able, I'd like to be involved in district matters in some limited fashion when appropriate. I know it may seem crazy to many of you, but being an educator is a great way to live, and I'm not sure I'm completely ready to give it up.

Doris Thomas, Social
Studies Teacher



- 1. 2000.
- 2. Friendships and the kindness of my students and watching my students excel and grow academically as well as a person.
- 3. Spending time with my three granddaughters!

Bill Wall, Science Special
Education Teacher



- 1. I started teaching at OCS in '07.
- 2. All the crazy science experiments and coaching highlights.

3. More time to travel and see my children in college and grandchildren in WNY and explore on my bikes!

Robin Perls, English and
Social Studies Special
Education Teacher



- 1. 1993. I worked in NYC before that.
- 2. Playing kickball with the third graders when I had recess duty at Woodstock Elementary, having the same students a few years in a row, building the nature trail with the head custodian and PTA, my co-teacher Sue Barthel becoming Aunt Sue when my daughter came along. Coming up to high school, working with Mary, who was brilliant with kids and made me laugh every day, creating the TUFs program with Janet Krieger and getting to know and love Kiara and all of our TUFs kids. Collaborating with kind and skillful co-teachers, school counselors, and teaching assistants. Keeping in touch with students and having some become co-workers at OCS, teaching my students' children, taking a daily break with the cafeteria staff who help me eat healthy food and lift my spirits, seeing my students become more and more of who they want to be.
- 3. I'm looking forward to spending time with my husband, our collective children, our grandson and friends and family. We plan to visit people who we love in NYC, overseas and out West. I'll have time to write, which I love to do, and I hope to exercise more. In the late afternoons, I want to keep taking long walks with my husband.

Retirees Reflections Continued

Laura Loheide, English Department



1. 1993.

2. It is so hard to say because I have cherished so much of my time with students and staff. Following a timeline: I remember the entire staff throwing me a bridal shower my first year of teaching. It was in the cafeteria, and the entire staff came to celebrate! I was marrying a man who most had had as their student, so there was a lot of nostalgia for everyone. I'd say my next meaningful memory was working with the late Ellen Sullivan to create an innovative experience for the junior high students: The late Mary Ann Bruck and I developed a Humanities curriculum for the 7th grade that merged English and social

studies and focused on authentic assessment. Soon, we started to advocate for a separate middle school altogether. Bridget Allison and I worked hard on that concept, and eventually we were rewarded with a dedicated principal and a focus on 7/8 as a middle school concept! My 20 years in the middle school are filled with so many wonderful memories: organizing trips to Boston and to DC with Linda Cavallaro, presenting at Middle States and NCTE, participating in the Curriculum Cup (special shout out to Chantal, iykyk), and later creating Curriculum Cup activities with Linda Cavallaro and Lori Matteson. My high school experience has been rewarding as well, filled again with wonderful staff and student relationships. Teaching AP Language, a few electives, 12th grade, and English 101/102 was a wonderful transition from 7th grade: I used to shepherd students into the middle school, and now I help to send them off to their next adventure! I feel really lucky to have ended my career doing what I love most: reading literature and discussing it.

3. I think my number one is that I will be able to travel OFF-SEASON! And, I have a fantasy

that I won't see grammar errors everywhere I go, a current side effect of 31 years as an English teacher.

Bridget Allison, English Department



1. I started at Onteora in 1994. I worked in Monterrey, Mexico at El Colegio Americano for three years right out of college and at La Escuela Americana in San Salvador, El Salvador, for the next three years before I began teaching at Onteora.

2. When I think of my 30 years at OCS, I think of kind colleagues who encourage and support, literary trees lining the hall like a forest, original student podcasts and videos, class trips to Boston

and Washington, DC, chaperoning a Spanish club trip to Spain and to NYC to see Don Quijote and Spanish class trips to Fruition, co-teaching humanities classes, block scheduling, Project Make-A-Difference, Middle Level Conferences, Diversity Day, Battle of the Bands, senior pranks, talent shows, cafeteria lunches, presenting at conferences, coaching volleyball, Rensselaerville staff development, managing the fitness center, differentiated instruction, delivering signs to seniors, the curriculum cup challenges, Battle of the Books, Poetry Out Loud, team teaching, marching in graduation, snow days, honoring retirees, Letters about Literature, Silver Quill dinners, the Belleayre Bash, so many spirit weeks, as well as countless conversations and memorable moments with hundreds of students.

3. Honestly, I am looking forward to doing whatever I want whenever I want. I want to read more and write more and laugh more and play more. I expect to travel and visit with family and friends. Spending more time outside with my dogs, Loretta and Conway, and being more active in general is something that I am really looking forward to.

Words of Wisdom from Mr. Epstein

By Aoife Bronston, Sophomore

Recently I sat down with Mr. Epstein to interview him on some random questions I made up on the spot in his classroom. I wanted to learn more about his life and how he ended up as a teacher at Onteora.

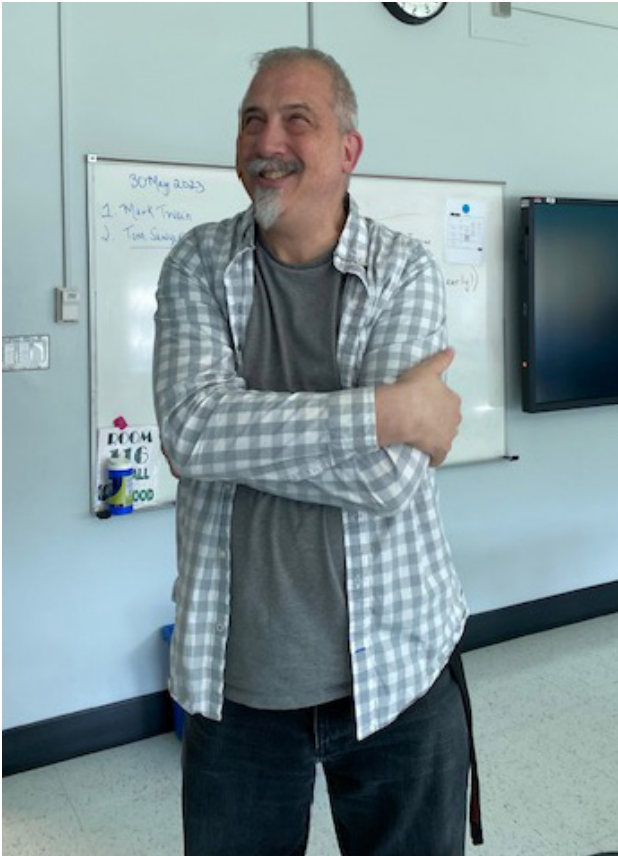
What was the best advice given to you while you were a teenager?

I had an English teacher in high school. She was a strange woman, but she would say things like “slow down and smell the roses,” which is kind of corny, but there’s a Latin phrase, *festina lente* which means “make haste slowly.” You gotta get stuff done, but you also need to appreciate the world around you.

Did you originally want to become a teacher?

No. So, I originally wanted to make movies. I went to college to study mechanical engineering and filmmaking because I wanted to do special effects, but I quickly realized that mechanical engineering was more complicated than it needed to be, so I ended up studying experimental film and getting more into film history. When I got out of college, I got into film editorial, so I was first working in an editorial house and videotape library. I then switched over, and I was an editing apprentice and then an editing assistant, but I left that because, in New York at the time, the only industry there was commercials, and I didn’t want to

sell people things they didn't need. Now I’m a teacher, and I’m still selling things people don’t need.



Courtesy of The Talon Staff

How has your method of teaching changed?

I used to have a lot of ideas about college readiness and about test prep and student success. I still believe in all of those things, but the most important thing I would like anyone in

a class to take away is to be a nice person. We’re all getting through this. I can teach how to take an AP exam, but it is not as important as the people sitting around you. The AP exam you will move on from, but you're not going to move past some of the people in this room.

When did you and your wife meet?

In college, actually. She was dating my next-door neighbor, and I was dating her roommate, and then both of those relationships ended. We were friends freshman and sophomore year, and then she studied abroad in junior year. When she came back we ended up together.

When did you know you wanted to settle down?

That’s a tough one. I knew I loved her, but as far as settling down it just happened, and then I needed a steady paycheck to support our family, so I became a teacher.

What’s your advice to people my age getting into relationships now?

Make haste slowly. I understand being a teenager and feeling the urgency of life, but take time to appreciate the world. The world is so messed up right now; just focus on the people around you because that’s the most important. You can change the world, but start with the people here.

Praise for AP HUG

By Talula Kirschner, Sophomore

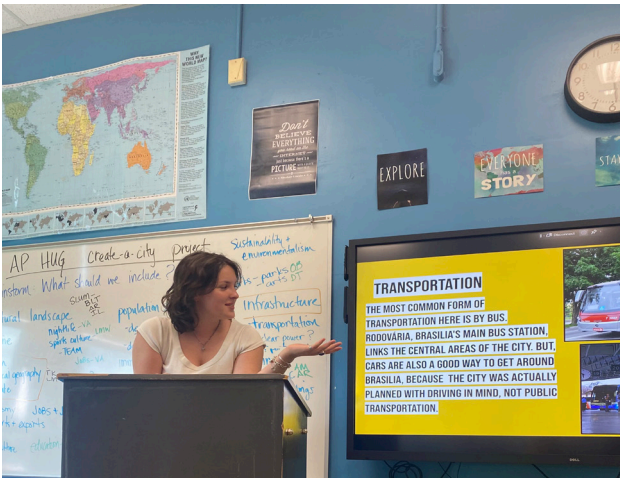
This year, AP Human Geography (AP HUG) has been, by far, my favorite and most influential class. Yet, in the beginning of the year, I didn’t even want to take it.

Last year, when I met with my guidance counselor to make my 2023–24 schedule, I had two options for first period, with one being Advanced Placement Human Geography that I chose, begrudgingly. Yet I ended up loving it very much. I think it’s such a wonderful choice because it is fun, not too hard, and most importantly, very educational.

For an Advanced Placement class, the workload is reasonable; it is not very demanding, and the topics are comprehensible for teenagers. In the curriculum, we cover 20 chapters ranging from agriculture and farming to cities and urban planning. It is taught by the lovely Ms. Curlew who is super kind, patient, and intelligent. For each unit, we watch videos and take notes, and there’s a flashcard assignment, a presentation, and a quiz. Now, don’t be scared by any of those because none of them are difficult or scary.

The videos are interesting and actually very funny; the narrator is quite a character, and the

notes are pretty minimal. The flashcards can be done in less than an hour, and you’ll have around a week to complete them. The tests are usually matching terms and AP questions.



Courtesy of The Talon staff

Then my favorite part: the presentations. Yes, you do have to present in front of the class, but it’s really not that bad, and it’s very beneficial to get comfortable with public speaking. For the projects, you get to research compelling topics and design your own slides. Definitely take advantage of the freedom—go all out, and have fun making your slides. They’re usually small, with the exception of a few larger

projects where you go further in-depth with more slides, and for some you can work with a partner or as a group.

As for the actual AP test in May, well, I’m not going to say it was overall an easy test, but compared to other APs, it is easier and also not as long. Lastly, this class pairs well with AP Euro, as some subjects overlap.

When I say this class has taught me more necessary information than any other, I truly mean it. It opened my eyes to so many events that happen around the world or right down the street that I had never even thought of.

Fiona Green, a fellow Sophomore who took the class this year said, “It’s a class for any human being living in the 21st century.” This truly resonates with me because everything that you’ll learn about in the class affects your life, and as young adults who are soon to be out and about in the “real world,” this information is invaluable. I know that the information I’ll carry out of high school from this class will stick with me for the rest of my life and have a profound impact no matter where I end up. You might think I’m dramatic for preaching about this class so much, but it has just left that much of an impression on me.

Regents Exams: Do We Really Need Them?

By Foster Knoche, Freshman

As the New York State Regents and other finals are coming up, students may be wondering, what’s the point? To many, Regents are just another long, boring exam with no purpose. Regardless, they are necessary for graduation, and we should understand why they exist in the first place and why NYS continues to use them.

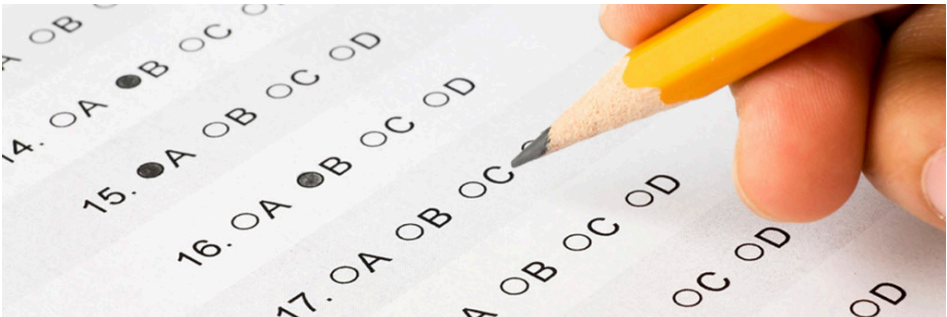
The Regents were first administered in 1878 as a final exam for high school students. There were Regents for five different subjects, most of which are no longer tested. A much more extensive list of exams was approved in 1879, although none of them were necessary for graduation. The number of Regents that were approved kept on growing and growing, with some very obscure subjects being tested. There was even an exam on Homer’s Iliad at one point! Many of these Regents were eliminated by the 1970s, and the remaining ones started to become more comprehensive. The Regents back then were really just tests that got approved by the state and weren’t mandatory.

In fact, the first time all students within New York had to get a 65 on all Regents exams taken to receive a diploma was in 2001. Regents were still widely administered before this date, but students could get a 55 and still graduate. Before the Regents were mandatory, other standardized tests were used within NYS, such as the Regents Competency Tests (RCTs), implemented in 1979. Despite the similar name, these tests were different and substantially easier. They were still issued until 2015 and were often used to test those with disabilities in the later years of their existence.

The Regents have changed a lot over the years, and some would argue that they have outlived their usefulness. From asking students about their opinions on the Regents, it seems like the consensus is that there should at least be some changes, but a final exam is still necessary in order to make sure students actually understand the material.

One Onteora student criticized the Regent’s ability to accurately gauge the competency of the test-takers, saying, “I think a standardized test is useful to judge the ability of students, but the curve on many tests renders those Regents Exams useless.” Exams such as the Algebra I Regents only require students to get 31% of points on the exam in order to receive a passing grade. This extreme curve is part of the reason why there is also a separate math final at our school. Small issues like this could be easily fixed, and simple steps could be taken to greatly improve the usefulness of the Regents Exams.

Out of the students I asked, some certainly had more negative views of the Regents than others. For example, one student said, “I don’t know how they expect us to remember everything. More frequent tests throughout the year is a better way to gauge understanding.” This is a criticism of finals as a whole that I’ve heard a lot. Finals do cause a lot of stress, and if you don’t get enough sleep the day before a final, you could



Courtesy of Creative Commons

really mess up your grade. It’s understandable why somebody would have this opinion, although I do think there still needs to be some way to measure your overall understanding of the curriculum.

Not only students have criticism of the Regents, however, with many teachers also critiquing the test-taking process. Teachers often have different perspectives on the Regents than students, focusing on how it impacts what they teach and the curriculum of the course. Mr. Colevas commented, “There are positives and negatives. Many of the positives are on the teacher’s end. We’re held accountable to teach the same curriculum in a familiar way which helps equality of education across the state. It forces teachers to actually teach the course well, and not just ramble on. The Social Studies Regents does a good job of teaching students about history over a wide range of time and focuses more on interpreting documents than memorization.” This is a more positive perspective on the Regents that you won’t often hear from a student.

Most students aren’t thinking about how the Regents affect their teachers, as they aren’t the people who actually take the exam. Having a standardized curriculum for classes is useful for many reasons, as it ensures students will be prepared for higher-level courses.

A lot of criticism revolving around the Regents is in part being addressed. Many people advocate for less rigid education, and the pathway system implemented by the NYS Education Department has helped achieve this goal. The pathway system allows students to have more options for the fifth Regents they need to take to graduate. Certain plans to get rid of the Regents have been considered as well, and much could change in the future. The Regents have certainly evolved greatly over the years, and there’s no reason to believe this will stop.

Overall, although it may be boring, some type of standardized testing is necessary. The Regents have many flaws, and the experience of taking them could be enhanced, but it’s important to remember that steps are being taken to improve the testing system. The Regents are constantly changing, and we should understand both the negatives and positives of them. The perspectives of both students and teachers are very important and should both be considered if we want to improve the Regents system and education at large.

It's Summer in the Hudson Valley!

By Abigail Elliott, Sophomore

With summer right around the corner, all I can think about are the activities I'm going to do to fill my time! Summer is my favorite time of year, with the exception of Christmas. The hardworking students and staff of Onteora finally get a break. Here are my top five ideas to make the summer of 2024 one to remember!

Number one: a room makeover! When summer starts, the next school year is right around the corner. As our schedules change, why not change our environment? Of course you could go all out for a room makeover, but you really don't need to. You don't have to spend any money at all. All you have to do is move some furniture around, and you're done! You could always raid the home-decor section at Target, but if you're on a budget this summer, just moving things around will have the same effect!

Number two: Let's go back to our childhood for a minute—how about a good game of hide-and-seek? In the dark. Everyone knows that if you're hosting a big sleepover, you have to host a large game of manhunt. In elementary school, you may have played sardines; manhunt is kind of the same concept. Typically you'll start with up to three “hunters,” and the rest of the group will be “hid-ers.” (This could change depending on the size of your group.) The hunters will count to 100, and then the game begins. The hunters will attempt to find and tag the hid-ers. When tagged, you become a hunter. It's as easy as that. The last man standing wins!



Courtesy of Creative Commons

Number three: Looking for some fun festivals to check out this summer? Stop by the Bearsville Theater, only about 20 minutes from Onteora High School! There are so many amazing festivals to explore such as the Bearsville Jazz, Art, Folk, and Country Music Festivals. All you have to do to find times and dates for these events is look up “Bearsville Theater events, summer 2024.” Festivals are the perfect way to hang out with friends and family, eat some food, and catch up all while enjoying music or gazing at some art! The Bearsville Theater is also in the same plaza as The Bear Café and Nancy's Artisanal Creamery. After you have a blast jamming to some fun music, don't forget to grab a bite to eat or a scoop to help you cool off.

Number four: Make a flower bouquet with your friends. Have you ever looked around and acknowledged how beautiful and full of color the world truly is? Flowers grow everywhere, but we often look right past them. Ditch your phone for a day, and go for a walk with your friends. As you walk, keep your eye out for flowers and pick them as you go! Why spend 20 dollars on a pre-arranged bouquet when you could make your own just how you want it? You may not find a bush of roses, but maybe you'll encounter a field of daisies. You don't need to put together a big bouquet; in fact, a mini bouquet is just as cute. Pick out your flowers and wrap a ribbon around them, and then you're set! You can keep these for yourself or even gift them to somebody you think could use a bit of color to brighten their mood!

Number five: Last but not least, is summer really summer without a fair or two? The fair has always been a personal favorite for me and many others. It's the perfect opportunity to go out with friends, eat food, ride rides, play games, and more. We are lucky enough to live in an area where numerous fairs come to town!



Courtesy of Creative Commons

The countdown has begun, starting off with the Ulster County Fair coming to town this summer from July 30 to August 4! The Ulster County Fair offers special deals such as Car Load Night, allowing your entire car of people to get in for 50 dollars (takes place July 30). For more information you can go to ulstercountyfair.com.

Another big fair that comes to town over summer is the Dutchess County Fair, taking place from August 20–25. The Dutchess County Fair is huge and has many opportunities for excitement. One part of the fairs that people often seem to forget are the animals! Petting zoos, races, and more! If you go to the Dutchess County Fair this summer, definitely check out the animals; they never disappoint! For more information about this fair visit dutchessfair.com. These are not the only fairs that will be in town this summer. For more information look up “Fairs near me, Summer 2024!” And don't forget: if you go to a fair this summer, get the lemonade!

That concludes my list of my top five favorite things to do during the summer. Of course there's so many other ways to fill your time, but these just happen to be my personal favorites. With summer fast approaching, I hope I could give you a little bit of excitement for what it will bring. Let's make Summer 2024 a memorable one!

The Senior Thesis: What Do Our Seniors Care About?

This year the senior Civics and AP Government classes were tasked with writing a 12–15 page proposal for a federal bill or amendment. Students were given complete freedom on the topic and were instructed to choose something meaningful to them. Here are some of their proposals:

Abilene Adelman:
Putting an age limit
the qualifications
for president.

Iris Koester:
Creating one public
state college in
every state that costs
under \$5,000.

Jefferson Voelker:
Updating power
grid in order
to allow for
widespread use of
renewable energy.

Benjamin Cox:
Banning
gerrymandering.

Caleb Frank:
Improving electric
vehicle charging
infrastructure in
America to ensure
equal access to EVs
for all drivers in all
states.

Virginia Potter:
Making an
amendment to
protect the rights of
the incarcerated.

Oscar Espinoza:
Reforming
immigration policy
to provide pathways
to citizenship.

Ava Lamb:
Making women's
reproductive
healthcare free
and accessible
nationwide.

Daniel Filkin:
Expanding
healthcare coverage
to include more
procedures.

Madeline Mills:
Creating a new
subdivision of
the HHS to focus
on biomedical
engineering and
the improvement of
prosthetic limbs.



Courtesy of Creative Commons

A Saucy Debate

By Val Albright, Sophomore

If you ask anyone who has taken philosophy or sociology about the difference between a topping and a seasoning, there's a high chance they'll burst into tears. Colevas has tortured countless students over the years with this seemingly simple task: "Distinguish between a topping, spice, sauce, gravy, seasoning, and dressing." Innumerable students have tried and failed. Hours have been wasted in Philosophy Club yelling at one another, yet there is no clear answer. There are ideas and a few things that people can agree on, but the truth will never be revealed.

For the past few meetings, the Philosophy Club has come up with a masterlist of relevant terms and a mammoth question:

- Topping
- Spice
- Gravy
- Sauce
- Dressing
- Marinade
- Dry rub
- Condiment
- Seasoning
- Dip
- Garnish
- Flavoring
- Syrup

What is the difference, if any?

Cooking and baking are not my forte, but talking about a whole lot of nothing for a long period of time is, so I have a lot of opinions.

There are constants in this debate. Spices and dry rubs are *always* dry, no exceptions. Gravies, sauces, dressings, marinades, condiments, dips, and syrups are *always* wet, no exceptions. Toppings, seasonings, garnishes, and flavorings have some discrepancies. Consider this: snow cone syrup, which is wet, is a flavoring, yet so is a bullion cube, which is dry. Or consider that a garnish can be either a sprinkling of parsley or a drizzle of honey.

These examples also bring in the issue of savory versus sweet, and whether that matters. For the sake of the argument, I say not really.

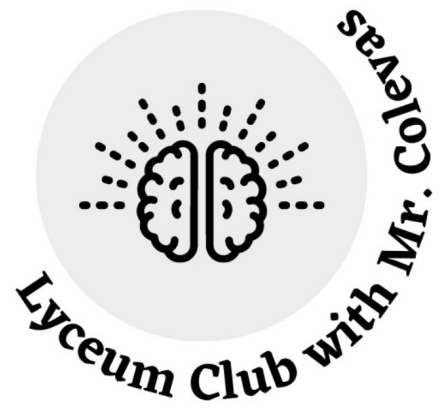
There's a distinction between sauces and gravies. A sauce can be any liquid, with or without chunks, that another food sits in. Gravy is specifically a meat (or meat substitute) based sauce. In this case, I would argue that the use also matters toward the definition. At Thanksgiving, gravy is gravy, but during a regular dinner, if a gravy is put on something other than meat, it's a sauce. I know there's the question of "oh, what about bolognese!?!?" My answer: what even is that? And, regardless, it's a sauce.

Marinades and dry rubs are the easiest things to define from this list. A marinade is a liquid that you put raw meat in to flavor it. Dry rub is the same thing, but you're just rubbing spices or salt onto the meat. Dressing can be used as a marinade, and you can marinate non-meat items, but that doesn't change the argument in any way. A dressing is NOT the same thing as a marinade, though it can be used as one. I'd say it's just something you put on a salad to add flavor.

Spices are more difficult. What is a spice? I'm gonna go out on a limb and say it's any dry flavoring you add to a recipe or on top of something: salt, garlic powder, cinnamon, hell, even sugar. I'm pulling out the history books on this one just to prove my point. Think about how much human suffering went into obtaining



Courtesy of Creative Commons



enough sugar in history via the spice trade, and now think about spices. Exactly. I'm not playing around with this s#%t. Regardless, considering that all of these items listed are added to or on top of recipes and add flavor, they count as spices. Garnish, as it should be included in this section, is either dry or wet additions in small amounts to the final product of a food, mainly for presentation.

Dips and condiments are oddly intertwined; it's like they're fraternal twins. A condiment can be a dip, but a dip can't be a condiment. If I dip my french fries in mustard, that mustard is now both. But if I spread french onion dip on my burger, I'm a freak. An opinion I have that's quite unpopular is that peanut/nut butter and jelly/jam are condiments, as is butter. A condiment, under my definition, is something put on a hand-eaten food that enhances a flavor or adds something new: relish, mustard, ketchup, salsa, hot sauce (WHICH IS NOT A SAUCE!!!), as well as the famed peanut butter and jelly. That sandwich is just two condiments slapped together on bread.

Butter can be used as such if it's spread on toast or waffles, just as syrup can be a condiment in the same scenarios. If a condiment is used as a dip, then it's just being used as something else. This is also the time to mention syrups. Chocolate, strawberry, peanut butter, caramel, and don't even get me started on snow cone "syrup." It's a flavoring, no arguments allowed. Syrups are traditionally

thick liquids added on top of a food to add/enhance flavor, typically in the sweet sector. It's sort of a chameleon in this group. It's a topping, condiment, flavoring, and occasionally a dip.

Now for *the* most dreaded group. What's a topping, seasoning, and flavoring? I will argue until my bitter death that EVERYTHING previously mentioned can be a flavoring. If it adds flavor which is PLEASANT (because spit has been used to try and destroy arguments in the club, which is just plain dumb) to the consumer, it's a flavoring. Enough said. Seasonings are just a subset of flavoring. They're like the same thing, though typically dry. Toppings are complex. It isn't as simple as something that goes on top of a food because that could encompass a million and one things. Its definition could be something along the lines of this: an edible item that is put on top of an already existing food to add flavoring, texture, or something else in a large enough amount that it creates a difference. Garnishes don't make any difference for the food they're on, which distinguishes them.

In the words of the late philosopher Daniel Dennet: "You can't waste your life defining your terms." So don't sweat it, everyone knows what you mean when you ask for syrup. Unless you're asking a philosophy student, then it'd be easier to get up and get it yourself.



Courtesy of Creative Commons

Onteora's Rocket Club Goes to Nationals



The Screaming Eagles, Onteora's Rocket Club, journeyed to Washington, DC, and Manassas, Virginia, on May 16 to compete in the National Finals of the American Rocketry Challenge. They came in 61st out of 100 teams and were only one second off from their time goal and 51 feet off from their height goal. In addition to competing in the competition hosted by the Aerospace Industry Association and the National Association of Rocketry, the students went to the National Air and Space Museum and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

Congratulations Screaming Eagles!



Where is the class of 2024

① SUNY Ulster – Hudson Anderson, Autumn Benjamin, Aiyana Blue, Alexandria Cannon, Logan Gilbert, Guadalupe Hernandez, Joshua Kurz, Augustus Luttinger, Rafael Solis, Logan Storey, Arely Tapia, Colvin VanDeBogart, Xiaohui Wen

② SUNY New Paltz – Olivia Davis, Jake DeRuvo, Ethan Katz-Dixon

③ SUNY Delhi – Hudson Bennett, Sarah Wolfeil

④ SUNY Oneonta – Arianhi Boyd, Isabella Iovieno

⑤ SUNY Albany – Benjamin Cox, Jonimaya Huber

⑥ Tufts University – Abilene Adelman

⑦ Boston College – Linus Driscoll

⑧ SUNY Purchase – Dylan Edelstein

⑨ Columbia University – Oscar Espinoza

⑩ CUNY Hunter – Daniel Filken

⑪ Dartmouth College – Caleb Frank

⑫ SUNY Dutchess – Ada Helm

⑬ Culinary Institute of America – Meredith Grant, K Schweizer

⑭ Berklee College of Music – Maria Grinberg

⑮ University at Buffalo – Sean Hallinan, Grace Kee

⑯ FIT – Sajani Huba

⑰ SUNY Suffolk – Riley Hegeman

⑱ Syracuse University – Iris Koester

⑲ Lineman Institute – Jack Longyear

⑳ Skidmore College – Nadou Louis

㉑ Cornell University – James Lynch

㉒ St John's University – Tyson Meade

㉓ Rutgers University – Madeline Mills

㉔ Brown University – Sophia Odato

㉕ Columbia-Greene – Hailey Palmer

㉖ Pace College – Jaxon Paynter

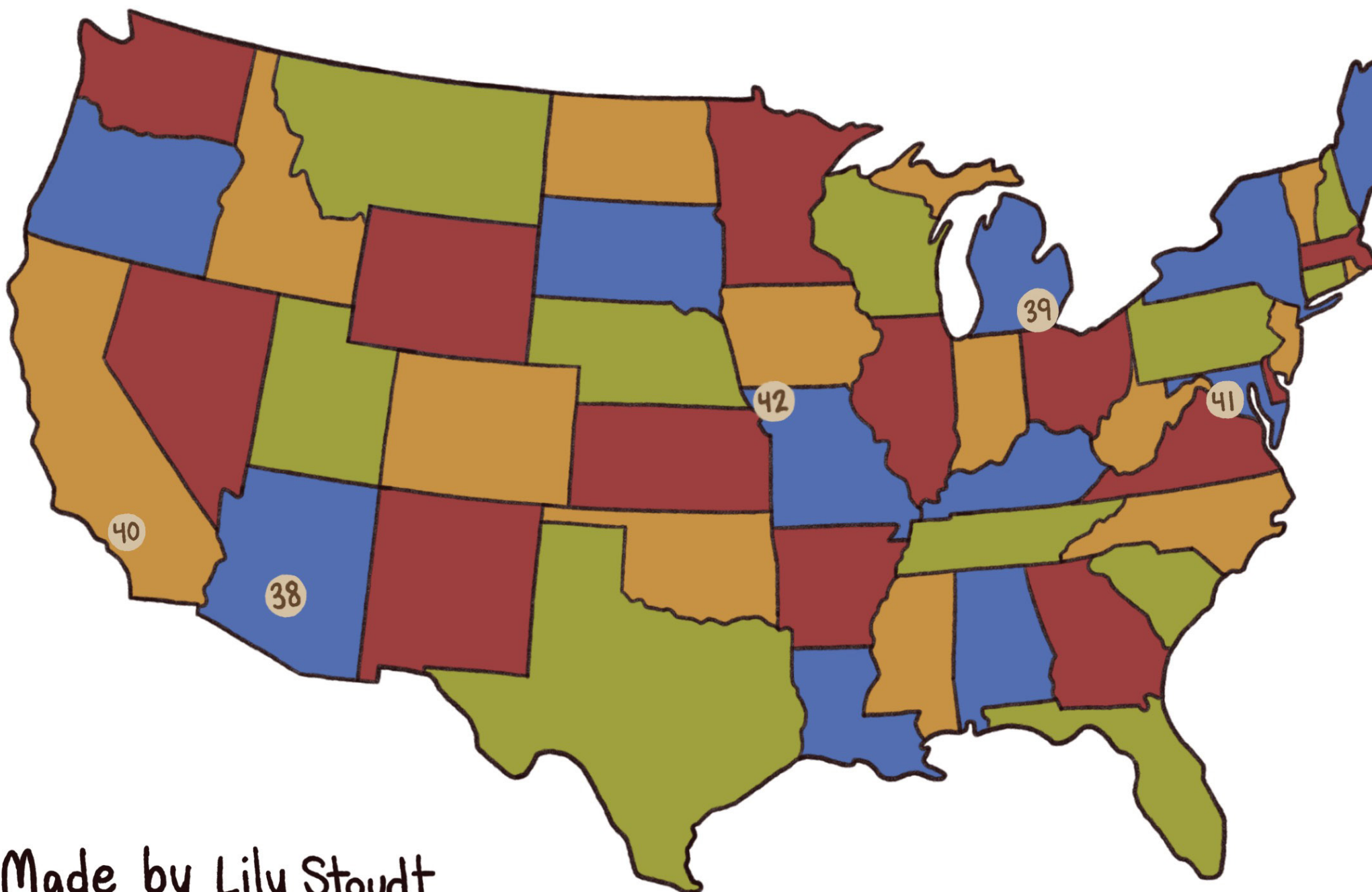
㉗ Wesleyan University – Virginia Potter

㉘ Vermont State-Castleton – Reese Rotella

㉙ Elmira College – Thomas Shields

㉚ Marist College – Anabel Sorbellini, Grace Molme

㉛ Massachusetts College of Art and Design – Maxine Spr



Made by Lily Stoudt

going?

orben

nan



d

ague



- 32 Penn State University - Noah Stern
- 33 Bryn Mawr College - Evangeline Truitt
- 34 Princeton University - Jefferson Voelker
- 35 University of New Haven - Sophia Wall
- 36 SUNY Oswego - Rachel Williams
- 37 Bentley University - Griffin Alterio
- 38 Arizona State University - Jack Barker, Ava Yarabek
- 39 University of Michigan - Ava Lamb
- 40 Loyola Marymount University - Chloe Maloney
- 41 George Washington University - Hailey Peck
- 42 Northwest Missouri State University - D'Viani Yinger



- University of Edinburgh - Noah Makowski
- American University of Rome - Che Spiotta

Employment / Other

Tanyon Augustine, Neko Bostic, Gianna Brink, Nicholas Caloro, Alexander Cobey, Angelina Ellsworth, Mayra Herrera, Ashley Mott, La'Myah Parker, Brody Pezzello, Cody Smith, Kelyn Umana, Austin Umhey, Dalilah Akam-Knox, Ethan Berryann, Cameron Grant, Mikayla Hartwell, Tiago Nogueira

Adam's Travel Log

By Adam Jordaan-Grady, Sophomore

I went to France in the summer of 2023 with my family. While there, I traveled to Paris, and it was better than I could have imagined.

The architecture is extravagant. And with each apartment adding their own flare, the city comes alive.

At the parks, there were people sitting in the grass, eating croissants, and just enjoying life. I went to the Eiffel Tower, and I have to admit: it was quite touristy, but getting over that fact, I enjoyed the view. It was all lit up, and I just had to take it in. As for the dessert—simply phenomenal. You can find any type of pastry, cake, or macaron in France.

I went to Scotland this past summer for my aunt's wedding hosted in a medieval castle overlooking the countryside. I was lucky enough to visit the capital city of Edinburgh. The wedding was extravagant, but the history ingrained in the castle was truly magical.

In Scotland, there is one traditional game that beats the rest: the Highland Games. Basically, you just throw massive pieces of wood. The city felt enchanted, with secret alleyways and dimly lit streets. I was finally able to live in the world of Harry Potter. The only complaint I have for Scotland was the food. It was not great, lacking the diverse choices that I would hope for.

I also went to England last summer. What I liked about England, primarily London, was the abundance of diverse cultures all compacted together. The food was great. They had Indian, Mexican, Chinese cuisines, any you could think of, really. The one con was the plain English food. It was rather bland and flavorless for my taste buds.

One of my favorite parts about the country was the emphasis on health. When I went there, I just felt like it was a really healthy community. In most neighborhoods, there is a wellness center. I was lucky enough to get to use the facilities. I went to one in London, and all the staff were very friendly. The gym had a very welcoming environment. I even got to swim, and while I was not the fastest, I still had a blast. Whenever I travel, I like to incorporate being active in the plans, and going to the rec center was a great bonus to the trip. So if you're ever in England, go to a wellness center where you can exercise and meet cool locals at the same time.

The next two destinations are not countries, but I think are worth putting on the list because of how great they are. The first spot is Miami, with its sunny days and white-sand beaches. No wonder people travel thousands of miles to go. We were lucky enough to stay at a hotel right next to the beach. The hotel consisted of

a pool, gym, and restaurant; it had it all. I love swimming. I always have. So Miami was great for me. The beaches were better than I could have imagined. The water was a crisp blue, and the sand was so white I had to squint my eyes. The food was great, with a strong Latin American and Caribbean influence. I was able to try new foods I'd never tried before, which I loved. Miami has quite the nightlife. The whole city felt like it woke up at night. Many people were out and about, creating a very fun atmosphere.

Next on the list is Santa Cruz. This is one of my favorite spots in all of America. There are so many parts of Santa Cruz I love. It has a vibrant art scene, a professional basketball team, and a beautiful beach. Santa Cruz has all my interests in one city, which is why I love it so much. Now let's not forget about the food. It was absolutely delicious, especially the burritos. Every Mexican restaurant we went to was phenomenal. The food was great. The beach was great. And the overall atmosphere of the city was very chill and laid back. It was a perfect place to go on vacation.

All in all, traveling has taught me more about myself and other cultures than I could have possibly imagined. I hope you get the chance to experience traveling—you won't regret it.

"One Size Fits Most"

By Lily McNamara, Junior

Brandy Melville, a clothing company originally from Italy, has garnered a demanding and loyal customer base since it opened its first U.S. location back in 2009. Composed of primarily teenage girls, Brandy Melville enthusiasts spend hundreds of dollars at the store, sometimes filling entire wardrobes. But while Brandy Melville is another sad example of fast fashion, it also plays a large part in perpetuating outdated and upsetting stereotypes, particularly about size.

The company holds a policy where their clothes come in a single size, and that size is small. They do not say 'small' though, and a common retort from the company when faced with criticism is the slogan 'one size fits most.' You might imagine that with their customers being mainly social media-active teenage girls, this blatant example of discrimination would put them out of business. But oddly enough, fierce social media activism turns soft when it comes to the consumer's convenience.

Brandy Hellville & the Cult of Fast Fashion, a new documentary by Australian filmmaker Eva Orner, goes more in depth on

Brandy Melville's confusing rise to fame and how they are able to stay in business despite blatant examples of fatphobia as well as racism and antisemitism. In the documentary, we learn how it is a

fire and hire employees completely based on their appearance.

With all of these offenses, how are they able to still make a profit? Well, the psychological techniques Brandy Melville

application process is submitting your social media for the higher-ups to inspect. If they believe an employee could be influential, they are much more likely to be given the job of walking around the store and interacting with customers. With this marketing method, the ideas of being a 'cool girl' and wearing Brandy Melville become interlinked.

In addition to this, they pander to celebrities to attract a certain demographic. The company will send large amounts of clothes for free to these celebrities, with the hope that they will post some of the clothing on social media. Then, when their dedicated followers see the mention of the brand, they are much more likely to go and buy because they are not being directly advertised to; rather, they feel like the celebrity is a friend offering style advice. The Brandy Melville brand is admittedly very good at advertising. It is hard to fault those who fall into their targeted marketing. But we must stay conscious of the power of voting with your dollar. And finding alternative brands that are aligned with the values you want to support is an easy way to stay politically active.

BRANDY ♥ MELVILLE



Courtesy of Creative Commons

known fact that Brandy Melville puts its employees of color in the back doing stock, while their front-of-store employees are all white. In addition to that, they are known to

employs could contribute to their enduring popularity. When hiring employees, they intentionally look for objectively 'popular' people. For example, a large part of the

Appreciation for Representation

By Harsimran Kaur, Sophomore

As an Indian-American teenage girl, representation is something I rarely see in mainstream media, and when I do, the only Indian character is either extremely creepy or a bookworm—an uncool, nerdy character only proving all the stereotypes of Indians correct. So when I came across *New Girl* I was left very surprised.

New Girl follows main character Jessica Day who is in need of a new place to stay after finding out that her longtime boyfriend has been cheating on her. She moves in with three guys in Los Angeles California. She’s a school teacher, and her best friend Cece Parehk, who’s been friends with Jess for nearly 20 years, quickly became my favorite character.

She’s cool, fun, spunky, speaks her mind, and absolutely gorgeous, even working as a model. And most importantly for myself, she’s South Asian with Indian parents. This is the first time I’ve seen an Indian character portrayed as the cool, hot character, rather than the nerd. It is actually the reverse: Jess is the know-it-all, smart one of the duo, and Cece is the cool one. She doesn’t follow traditional stereotypes that are put upon Indians and does whatever she pleases.



Courtesy of Creative Commons

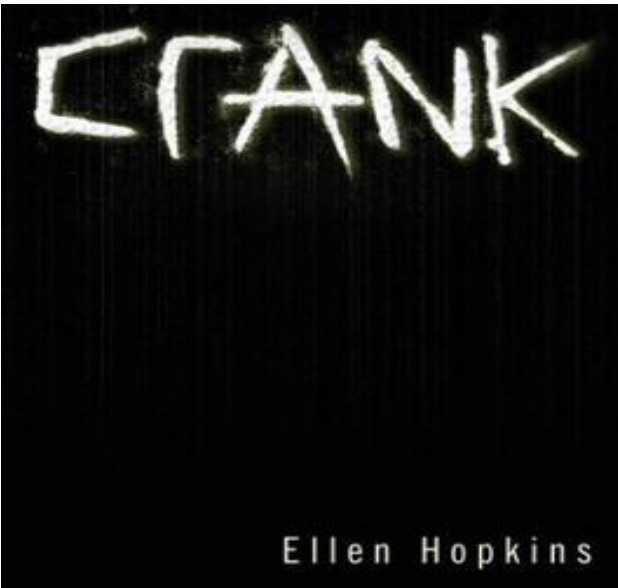
Even though I am nowhere near Cece’s confidence level and personality, I find it extremely refreshing to see a character swaying away from traditional stereotypes. Overall, I love *New Girl*. It’s a show filled with found family, and it specifically spoke to me via the representation of Cece Parehk. I would recommend this show to everyone who will listen.

Crank: A Controversial Contemporary Read

By Val Albright, Sophomore

Banned and contested by many, the verse novel *Crank*, written by Ellen Hopkins is sure to keep you hooked long after you finish it. *Crank* follows 17-year-old Katherine, also referred to as Bree, and her nasty, passionate affair with meth.

The novel is set in early 2000s Reno, NV, and takes place over the course of a summer. Katherine’s father, a deadbeat living in New Mexico, decides to invite his daughter over for a while during the summer. She accepts and meets two of her greatest assets—or foes—Crank and Bree. Bree is the Katherine who parties, seduces, takes risks, and gets what she wants, when she wants it. Bree and Katherine are two personalities living in one body, heart and mind fighting against each other. During a



passionate summer affair, Bree is introduced to cigarettes, romance, and eventually, meth.

When she leaves New Mexico, she’s Bree living in Katherine’s skin. Bree has issues living up to Katherine’s standards. She’s an honors student, a goodie-two-shoes. She’s this perfect girl living the perfect life. Bree thrives on chaos, destruction, promiscuity, and doing whatever it takes to get that next hit. Throughout the weeks and months, Bree suffers. She rides highs that are unimaginable and suffers traumas of an equal impossibility.

As the novel ends, the fight for sobriety is won, though the question is: how long will it last? The sequel, *Glass*, finishes out Bree’s story. *Crank* will get you hooked and keep you coming back until you’re done. Then you’ll be chasing the next hit of Hopkins’s writing immediately after.

Lucia Reviews Recent Releases

By Lucia McDonagh, Sophomore



Courtesy of Creative Commons

The Tortured Poets Department by Taylor Swift:

On February 4, Taylor Swift won her 13th grammy and announced the release date of her upcoming album, *The Tortured Poets Department*. At 12:00 a.m. on April 19, Taylor Swift’s 11th studio album was released, and later that night, she released an additional 15 songs, naming this extension of the album *The Tortured Poets Department: The Anthology*.

In the wake of the release, critics were writing about how the production was very similar to her 10th studio album, *Midnights*, and

felt that it was overdone, and that it was time for Swift to move on to something new. Another complaint was the length of the album. To some people, 31 songs felt too long, and the songs sounded too similar.

While this is one side of the responses to the album, there is another side. The album is genius. *The Tortured Poets Department* starts out with a very produced song, “Fortnight (feat. Post Malone).” This begins the album by introducing the mental hospital aesthetic and the main idea of the album: female rage. Songs like “Who’s Afraid of Little Old Me,” “I Can Do It With A Broken Heart,” and “But Daddy I Love Him” highlight the hidden struggles of Swift’s life in the spotlight. “So Long London,” “loml,” and “The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived” are intense songs about heartbreak with bridges that are full of rage. “The Alchemy” and “So High School” express feelings about new love. “Robin,” a ballad, reflects on her childhood, seemingly written from the perspective of her now

speaking to her younger self. Those are just a couple of songs that make up this meaningful and honest album, and when put together, they make up the soundtrack to what Swift calls “Female Rage: The Musical.”



Courtesy of Creative Commons

Hit Me Hard And Soft by Billie Eilish:

On May 17, Billie Eilish released her highly anticipated third studio album, *Hit Me Hard And Soft*. When talking about her album, she said, “I feel like this album is me. It’s not a character. It feels like the *WHEN WE ALL FALL ASLEEP, WHERE DO WE GO?* version of me. It feels like my

youth and who I was as a kid.”

The album keeps with Eilish’s previous use of melancholy and menacing beats, along with her infamous breathy singing; however, she does branch out in her singing style with songs like “LUNCH,” where she leaves the breathy voice behind.

Compared to her previous albums, the lyrics are new and different. Rather than being about world issues such as climate change like her previous albums, she sings more about love, her life in the spotlight, and her sexuality.

This 45-minute, 10-song album is filled with meaningful lyrics, new melodies, and incredible production that highlights Eilish’s voice and lyrics. She, her producer, and her brother FINNEAS also included the Attacca Quartet in many of the songs. Her use of the quartet brings in a new layer to the mostly electronic production that we are used to.

This album is definitely her figuring out who she is as a musician, and as a person.

'Tis the Offseason

By David Troeger, Junior

The draft has finally come and gone, and now we begin the long wait for absolutely nothing important to happen at training camp. 'Tis the offseason: the greatest time for randomness, preparation, longshot Super Bowl odds, strange scandals, and betting on which AFC West receiver gets arrested first this time around.

Now, we take a look at the contenders, the pretenders, and the Steelers, who always manage to find themselves somewhere in the middle.

I think it's safe to say "dynasty," with Patrick Mahomes looking to playground-football his way to a fourth ring and the NFL's first ever three-peat. Assisting Kermit, the wide receiver room is looking improved, although it will be a tough wait for Brett Veach and the coaches to see the punishment for Rashee Rice, the latest case of AFC West widerecieveritis.

However, even without last year's rookie standout, the additions of deep threats Marquise "Hollywood" Brown and Xavier Worthy should bring the jolt this receiving room has been missing since the departure of Tyreek Hill. Travis Kelce should continue to be a factor, although I do expect a decline. The larger question mark is the defense. The loss of L'Jarius Sneed is a tough pill to swallow, although Trent McDuffie brings great value.

Losses to other contenders provide a great opportunity for another Lombardi Trophy, making Kansas City Chiefs the Troeger Preseason Pick. In the rest of the division, the Chargers picked up Jim Harbaugh to avoid paying for another medic specifically trained in the Heimlich maneuver, prompting Justin Herbert's job description to change from "Top-10 Quarterback" to "#1 Hand-off-er."

The Raiders lost their quarterback to the Dirty Birds who already seem to be sick of "Kirko Chainz" walking around shirtless with his two kids and ten watches, seemingly trying to outpace Phillip Rivers with his ten kids and two watches.

Unfortunately, the Broncos had a good draft for once, which makes my job difficult, even re-signing the league's consensus #1 receiver in Lil'Jordan Humphrey.

Perhaps the greatest losses were faced by the Bills, who will once again be haunted by a missed field goal. Still yet to reach the big game after their four-year losing streak, the Bills are unlikely to recover this time around. Josh Allen can

prevent a total meltdown, and their strong O-line and (usually) dynamic run game can keep this team on its feet. However, I can't see this team making a deep run after losing most of their receiver corps and half the defense. The Dolphins are the latest to take the OBJ three-games-for-eight-million-and-a-ring deal, and they should return to where they were last season.

The Jets fixed their uniforms, but not their team, although they made a move for the future in drafting Jordan Travis after Zach Wilson got tired of listening to Aaron Rodgers's conspiracy theories.

Don't expect much from the NFC East this season. The Eagles have the best chance at success, but their late season meltdown last year put a large dent on the momentum of this program.

Moving backwards, the Giants have the mob out searching for their offense, going by the moniker of Saquon Barkley. Reports say the suspect has fled in the direction of Philadelphia.

The media seems to have misinterpreted Jerry Jones going "all in" on a bag of Lays, while Ceedee Lamb is at a contract standstill, possibly taking out their offense as well. This was likely a defensive decision, as it means Prescott is doing less throwing, and, by extension, less throwing the ball to the other team. There is nothing of interest I can write about the Commanders.

On to the league's strangest, most confusing, and possibly strongest division. The AFC North seems like it could go through anyone this year. The Browns are surprisingly lacking in controversy this offseason and have retained much of their strong roster, even bolstering the sideline by adding Jerry Jeudy to pair with Amari Cooper, creating one of the league's more dangerous receiver tandems.

Pittsburgh decided to put Justin Fields out of his misery, letting him out of the purgatory that is the Chicago Bears to see if he could compete with Russell Wilson after he did high knees all the way over from Denver while cooking his famous Danger-Russ BBQ blue cheese waffle special. They also managed to replace the league's worst offensive coordinator with

the league's worst head coach. Even I didn't see that coming, so kudos to them on that one.

The Ravens have come into this season with a revitalized Lamar Jackson and look poised to make another run, with last season's loss to the Chiefs still burning in their minds. Using Derrick Henry as a decoy for the league's best running-back-who-can-also-throw-really-well wasn't a bad decision either.

The Bengals have shown how much of a threat they can be with a healthy Joe Burrow, coming oh-so-close to their first Super Bowl title three years ago. However, the locker room seems to have grown toxic, as the roster

they had worked so hard to build around him is crumbling. Tee Higgins, Tyler Boyd, D.J. Reader, Chidobe Awuzie, and more contributors are gone, while Trey Hendrickson has requested a trade, and Joe Mixon was shipped off to Houston.

Speaking of..

We have a Houston problem. No, this is not an incorrectly recalled phrase; it's a strange alternate

reality that we seem to have been transported to. The Houston Texans seem to be a real contender for the first time in the team's relatively short history, with C.J. Stroud proving that you don't need to be able to pass a third grade level math test to be good at football. Joe Mixon should pair nicely with Dameon Pierce, and the defense should be decent. Unfortunately, as always, there's a 'however' that might hinder the NFL's Cinderella story. Stefon Diggs, the man who forced himself off two NFL teams by splitting the locker room and accosting his quarterbacks, is in town.

The Colts are in a good spot but may want to rethink passing the ball to a third-string running back on 4th and 3 with the season on the line. The Jaguars, so high and mighty one year ago, seem unable to go far in the postseason. Remember: playoff wins against Brandon Staley don't count. The Titans without Derrick Henry don't even warrant a team, and I believe myself and many others would prefer to see the Battlehawks in this position. Take away the Oilers throwbacks, and there is absolutely nothing here in Tennessee.

On to the league's secondary darlings, the Detroit Lions were

one half away from the historic franchise's first Super Bowl appearance. Though they fell short while the nation rooted them on, there's a bright future ahead in the motor city. Perhaps not so in the freezing North.

Minnesota, you've done it again. The Viking's acquisition of Aaron Jones makes a lot more sense now that they took the handoff specialist himself with the 10th pick.

The Packers seem fully incapable of drafting a quarterback that isn't a hall-of-famer, and I'm getting really annoyed by it. Share some with the rest of us.

The Bears have built a decent roster, although the fans haven't yet seemed to realize that Caleb Williams is not Jesus returned. However, the years of consecutive first overall picks seem to be over.

There isn't a whole lot to talk about with the other divisions. The NFC West runs through San Francisco. The South looks quite bleak aside from a finally realized Baker Mayfield and the Falcons having an existential crisis as to whether they want to focus on winning now or building for the future, paying Kirk Cousins 180 million before drafting Michael Penix Jr. ninth overall.

Finally, let's get to the power rankings. Please remember: if anyone is offended by their team's placement on this list, I don't care.

1. Kansas City Chiefs
2. Baltimore Ravens
3. San Francisco 49ers
4. Detroit Lions
5. Houston Texans
6. Green Bay Packers
7. Miami Dolphins
8. Tampa Bay Buccaneers
9. Philadelphia Eagles
10. Buffalo Bills
11. Los Angeles Rams
12. Cincinnati Bengals
13. Cleveland Browns
14. Indianapolis Colts
15. New York Jets
16. Pittsburgh Steelers
17. Dallas Cowboys
18. Atlanta Falcons
19. Los Angeles Chargers
20. Seattle Seahawks
21. Jacksonville Jaguars
22. New Orleans Saints
23. Denver Broncos
24. Chicago Bears
25. Minnesota Vikings
26. Las Vegas Raiders
27. Washington Commanders
28. New York Giants
29. New England Patriots
30. Arizona Cardinals
31. Carolina Panthers
32. Tennessee Titans





Clawsnaps



For former Phoenicia students:

What was the most memorable part
of Phoenica Elementary School?



Keegan Burkhardt, Junior:
Field day was the best.

Sophia Odato, Senior: Apple
Time in Ms. White’s first-grade
class. We had a designated
time to sit on the carpet and
eat our apples.



Connor Gierloff, Sophomore:
Getting a home run in
kickball!

Bella Warren, Sophomore: It’s
a small school so the teachers
were able to be close with the
students.



Hazel Hanes, Sophomore:
The nature trails we went on
for science class.



Juliet Barry, Sophomore: I
had a really fun time when we
painted the mural on the wall
next to the music room.



Alexa Hull, Sophomore: It was
nice being in such a tight-knit
community.



Luc Millenson-Wilens,
Sophomore: The third-grade
kickball game. My team
won. And field day was super
exciting.



Ada Helm, Senior: The
Mystery of the Snowmen.



Coco Asada, Junior: When we
did the play: *Where the Wild
Things Are!*

Jonimaya Huber, Senior:
I really liked the Western
Nights with the cakewalks and
cowboy fits.



Charlie Denton and Archie
Popp, Freshmen: Our third-
grade teacher Mr. Hallock was
the best teacher we’ve ever
had.



Cole Matteson, Junior: When
we buried the time capsule.

Izzy Wentland and Alena
Grant, Freshmen: There was
a stray dog that would always
wander on the playground.

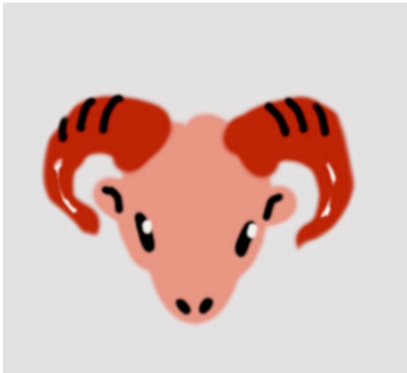


Lilli Sanchez, Sophomore:
The annual talent show was
great! And I loved the 100th
day of school celebration.

Madeline Mills, Senior: I
really enjoyed the holiday craft
fairs and other fundraisers
the school held. They really
catered to the students which
made them enjoyable to attend
at that age.

Horoscopes

By Delilah Lieberman, Sophomore



ARIES (Mar. 21–Apr. 19)

Aries, I encourage you to watch where you walk;
You may get lost or distracted by a hawk.
If you don't pay closer attention to these things,
You'll end up finding out the consequences they may bring.



LEO (Jul. 23–Aug. 22)

Leos, I've sensed your optimism now for a while.
You can light up a room with a simple smile.
So bring this attitude into the summer,
And make sure these warm nights aren't a bummer!



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21)

If you have a pet, a cat or dog at home,
You should show them more love than you have shown.
Give them a treat, or a scratch on the chin.
They might feel neglected; give them a win!



TAURUS (Apr. 20–May 20)

Taurus, Regents are coming up quick,
So grab pen and paper, and hear that click.
If you don't study now, you will surely regret it.
They're coming up, but you're doing great; don't sweat it!



VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sep. 22)

Virgos, you need to try new things.
You should get off that phone, ignore its ring!
Step outside, and enjoy the weather.
Wear something out of your comfort zone; buy that sweater!



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19)

Capricorns, you have done great things this year.
You should be proud; the end of school is near!
You should give yourself a pat on the back,
And enjoy the warmth, on the beach with a snack.



GEMINI (May 21–Jun. 20)

Geminis, go clean your room.
I can smell the week old pizza of doom.
There's just so many things on that floor;
You can barely open and close your door!



LIBRA (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

Summer vacation is around the corner.
You have found your calling; don't look any further.
The hobby that you have spent many hours on
Will bring you success under the hot summer sun.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18)

If there's been something that you've wanted to do
Before the school year ends and the sky is blue.
You need to act on it very fast,
Or you'll regret not doing it when you look back on your past.



CANCER (Jun. 21–Jul. 22)

Cancers, if you're taking any APs next year,
Then listen to this, and open your ears:
The summer homework can quickly catch up to you,
So don't waste your time, and turn it in before it's due!



SCORPIO (Oct. 23–Nov. 21)

Scorpios, if you've lost something in the near past,
Try looking in the places that you would think of last.
Look under your bed, on the carpet and the floor,
Or try looking in that one broken dresser drawer.



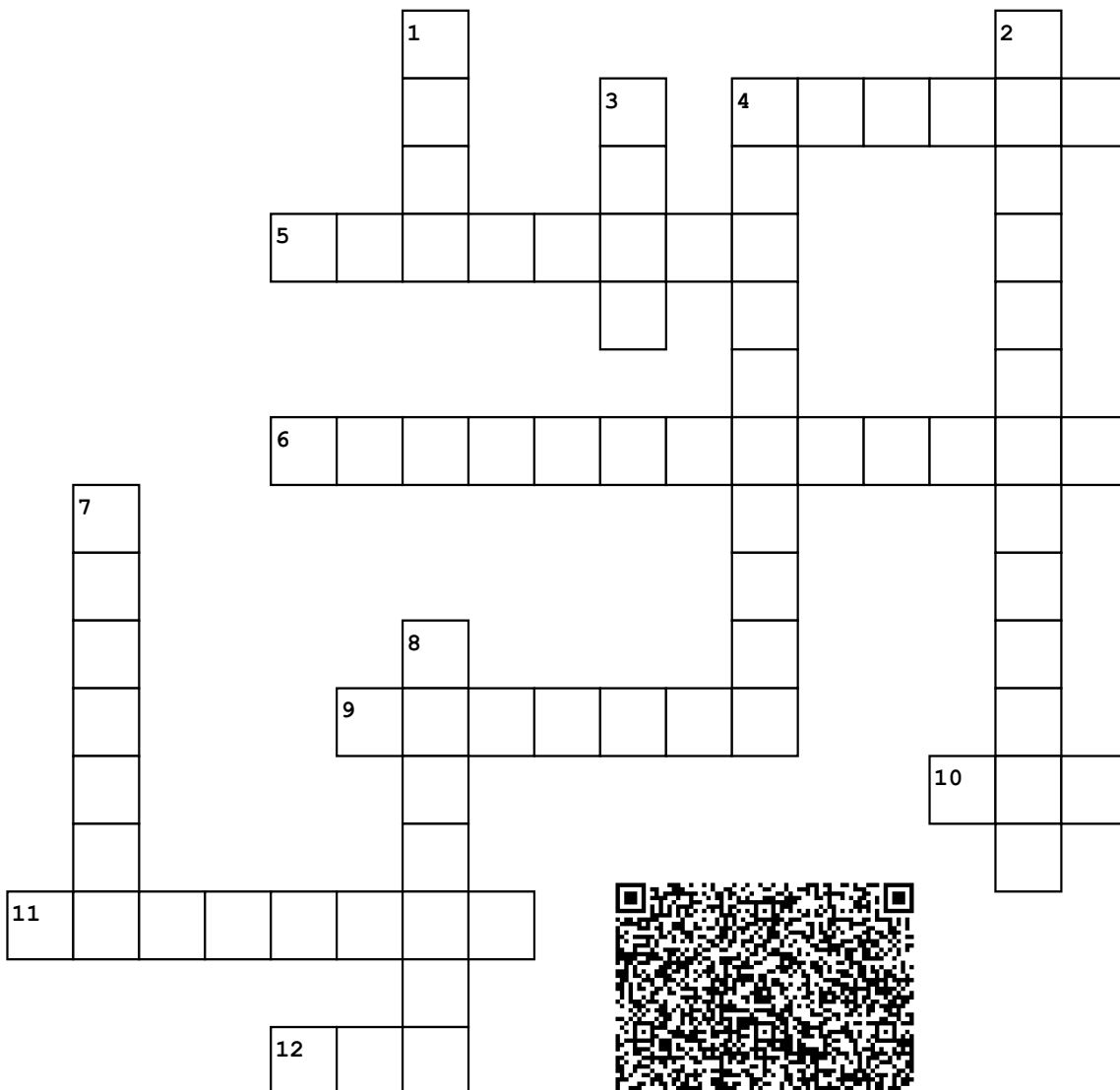
PISCES (Feb. 19–Mar. 20)

School is tricky; school is hard,
But soon you'll be able to let down your guard.
You'll be more relaxed and less stressed out,
And you won't have that one class that makes you pout!

By Talula Kirschner, Sophomore

[illegible]

By Samatha Navarro, Sophomore



1. Sleep-away or just for the day, parents get a day off either way
2. The whole senior class cut school with a case of 4-Down
3. The night of nights
4. This contagious disease plagues seniors everywhere
7. Gives one of these responses: Accepted, Wait-listed, Deferred, Denied
8. Winners of War of the Classes

Playlists

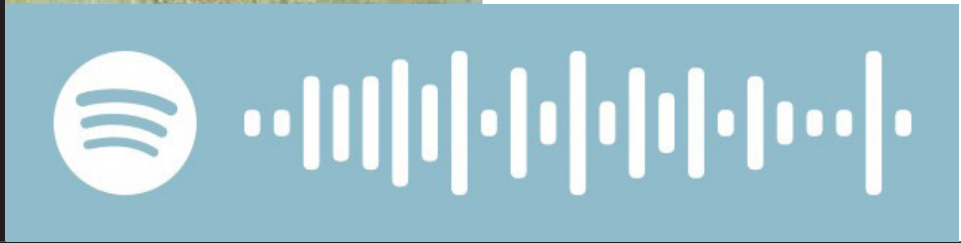
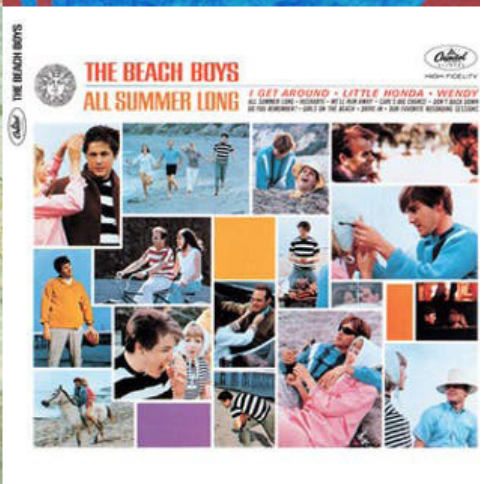
By Ada Helm, Senior

By Shelby Buryk, Sophomore

BLEACHERS



STRANGE DESIRE



The Sweet Spot: Peach Crisp

By Talula Kirschner, Sophomore

Cobbler - (*noun*) A fruit dessert made with a top crust of pie dough or biscuit dough but no bottom crust

Crisp/crumble - (*noun*) A type of dessert consisting of fruit baked with a crumble topping, made of a brown sugar streusel topping often containing old-fashioned rolled oats

The precise difference between these two desserts is often the subject of much confusion. This recipe is a crisp, or as some call, a crumble, which in my opinion, is much better than a cobbler. Last summer, we had a plethora of fruit from our two peach trees, and I made this treat at least once a week because, for one, it's so delicious, and also so we didn't waste any peaches. They could be interchanged with any other fruit, but peaches are great for the summer because that's when they're in season. This is a pretty quick and simple recipe that you'll never get tired of. Bonus points to those who use hand picked peaches!



Courtesy of Creative Commons

INGREDIENTS

6 large, ripe peaches

cup light brown sugar

¼ white granulated sugar

1 ½ tsp cinnamon

½ tsp nutmeg

1 tsp vanilla extract

¼ cup unsalted butter, melted

Mixture of 4 tsp cornstarch and 4 tsp water

For the oat topping:

¾ cup whole oats

1 cup light brown sugar

¾ cup all-purpose flour

1 tsp cinnamon

½ cup cold unsalted butter, diced into one centimeter cubes

INSTRUCTIONS

First preheat your oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, peel and pit your peaches, and cut into slices. This step is a bit messy. Add lemon juice, butter, cinnamon, nutmeg, and both sugars. In a separate bowl, make your two-part cornstarch slurry, and add it to the peaches. Mix until the peaches are evenly covered. Then transfer to a pie tin.

For the topping: mix your oats, sugar, flour, and cinnamon. Add the butter, and then with either a fork, pastry cutter, or (what I think works best) your hands. Mix in the butter, slightly mashing it in to create the perfect crumble. Evenly coat the peaches with this.

Bake for 20–25 minutes, or until the top is golden brown. After it is mostly cooled but still a bit warm, it's ready to serve! Add some vanilla ice cream and caramel sauce, and you'll be in heaven. Enjoy!

Want more from *The Talon*? Check out our digital archives at <https://ohs.onteora.k12.ny.us/clubs/school-newspaper-the-talon/>

